

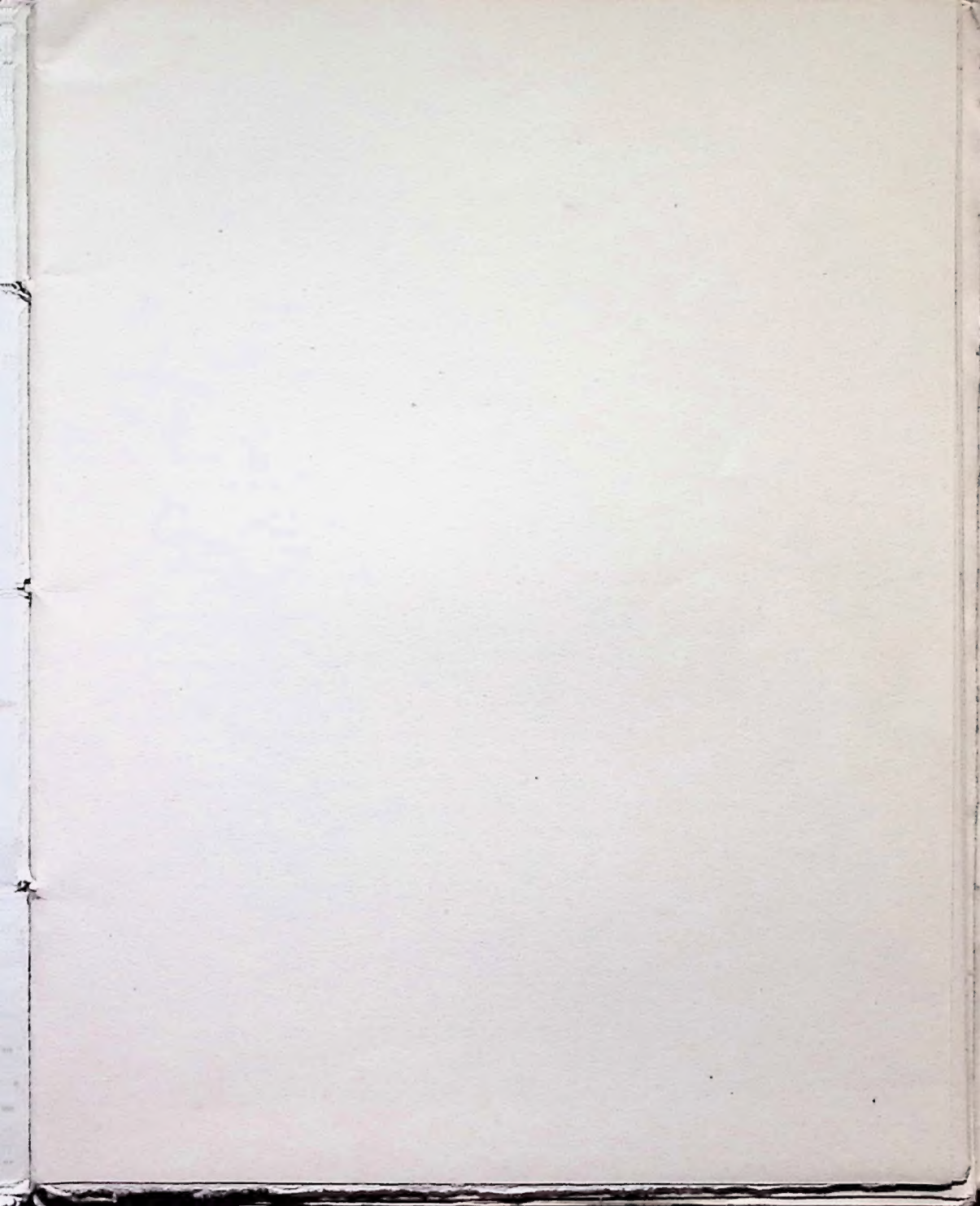
THE ROYCROFT SHOP


A HISTORY
BY ELBERT HUBBARD



THE · ROYCROFTERS
EAST · AURORA · ERIE · COUNTY · N.Y.

2022.31.9



HE editor of "The Cosmopolitan Magazine" has asked me to write an article for publication about myself and the work in which I am engaged.

I think I am honest enough to sink self, to stand outside my own personality, and answer the proposition ♫ Let me begin by telling what I am not, and thus reach the vital issue by elimination ♫ ♫

First. I am not popular in "Society," and those who champion my cause in my own town are plain, unpretentious people.

Second. I am not a popular writer, since my name has never been mentioned in the "Atlantic," "Scribner's," "Harper's," "The Century" or the "Ladies' Home Journal." But as a matter of truth, it may not be amiss for me to say that I have waited long hours in the entry-way of each of the magazines just named, in days ago, and then been handed the frappe.

Third. I am not rich, as the world counts wealth.

Fourth. As an orator I am without the graces, and do scant justice to the double-breasted Prince Albert.

Fifth. The Roycroft Shop, to the welfare of which my life is dedicated, is not so large as to be conspicuous on account of size.

Sixth. Personally, I am not ten-thousand-dollar beauty: the glass of fashion and the mold of form are far from mine. ¶ Then what have I done concerning which the public wishes to know? Simply this:

In one obscure country village I have had something

to do with stopping the mad desire on the part of the young people to get out of the country and flock to the cities. In this town and vicinity the tide has been turned from city to country. We have made one country village an attractive place for growing youth, by supplying congenial employment, opportunity for education and healthful recreation, and an outlook into the world of art and beauty.

All boys and girls want to make things with their hands, and they want to make beautiful things, they want to "get along," and I've simply given them a chance to get along here, instead of seeking their fortunes in Buffalo, New York or Chicago. They have helped me and I have helped them; and through this mutual help we have made head, gained ground upon the whole. ¶ By myself I could have done nothing, and if I have succeeded, it is simply because I have had the aid and co-operation of cheerful, willing, loyal and loving helpers. Even now as I am writing this in my cabin in the woods, four miles from the village, they are down there at the Shop, quietly, patiently, cheerfully doing my work—which work is also theirs. ¶ No man liveth unto himself alone: our interests are all bound up together, and there is no such thing as a man going off by himself and corraling the good.

When I came to this town there was not a house in the place that had a lavatory with hot and cold water attachments. Those who bathed, swam in the creek in the summer or used the family wash-tub in the

kitchen in winter. My good old partner, Ali Baba, has always prided himself on his personal cleanliness. He is arrayed in rags, but underneath, his hide is clean, and better still, his heart is right. Yet when he first became a member of my household, he was obliged to take his Saturday-night tub out in the orchard from spring until autumn came, with withered leaves ♫ He used to make quite an ado in the kitchen, heating the water in the wash-boiler. Six pails of cistern-water, a gourd of soft soap and a gunny sack for friction were required in the operation. Of course the Baba waited until after dark before performing his ablutions. But finally his plans were more or less disturbed by certain rising youth, who timed his habits and awaited his disrobing with o'er-ripe tomatoes. The bombardment, and the inability to pursue the enemy, turned the genial current of the Baba's life awry until I put a bathroom in my house, with a lock on the door ♫ This bit of history I have mentioned for the dual purpose of shedding light on former bathing facilities in East Aurora, and more especially to show that once we had the hoodlum with us. ¶ Hoodlumism is born of idleness; it is useful energy gone to seed. In small towns hoodlumism is rife, and the hoodlums are usually the children of the best citizens. Hoodlumism is the first step in the direction of crime. The hoodlum is very often a good boy who does not know what to do; and so he does the wrong thing. He bombards with tomatoes a good man taking a bath, puts tick-tacks on

windows, ties a tin can to the dog's tail, takes the burrs off your carriage-wheels, steals your chickens, annexes your horse-blankets and scares old ladies into fits by appearing at windows wrapped in a white sheet. To wear a mask, walk in and demand the money in the family ginger-jar is the next and natural evolution.

To a great degree the Roycroft Shop has done away with hoodlumism in this village, and a stranger wearing a silk hat, or an artist with a white umbrella, is now quite safe upon our streets. Very naturally the Oldest Inhabitant will deny what I have said about East Aurora—he will tell you that the order, cleanliness and beauty of the place have always existed. The change has come about so naturally, and so entirely without his assistance, that he knows nothing about it. Truth when first presented is always denied, but later there comes a stage when the man says, "I always believed it." And so the good old citizens are induced to say that these things have always been, or else they gently pooh-pooh them. However, the truth remains that I introduced the first heating-furnace into the town; bought the first lawn-mower; was among the first to use electricity for lights and natural gas for fuel; and so far, am the only one in town to use natural gas for power.

Until the starting of the Roycroft Shop there were no industries here, aside from the regulation country store, grocery, tavern, blacksmith-shop and sawmill—none of which enterprises attempted to supply

more than local wants. There was Hamlin's stock-farm, devoted to raising trotting horses, that gave employment to some of the boys; but for the girls there was nothing. They got married at the first chance; some became "hired girls," or, if they had ambitions, fixed their hearts on the Buffalo Normal School, raised turkeys, picked berries, and turned every honest penny towards the desire to get an education so as to become teachers. Comparatively, this class was small in number. Most of the others simply followed that undefined desire to get away out of the dull, monotonous, gossiping village; and so, craving excitement, they went away to the cities and the cities swallowed them. A wise man has said that God made the country, man the city, and the devil the small towns.

The country supplies the city its best and its worst. We hear of the few who succeed, but of the many who are lost in the maelstrom we know nothing. Sometimes in country homes it is even forbidden to mention certain names. "She went to the city," you are told,—and there the history abruptly stops. ¶ And so, to swing back to the place of beginning, I think the chief reason many good folks are interested in the Roycroft Shop is because here country boys and girls are given work at which they can not only earn their living, but get an education while doing it. Next to this is the natural curiosity to know how a large and successful business can be built up in a plain, humdrum village by simply using the talent

and materials that are at hand, and so I am going to tell now how the Roycroft Shop came to start; a little about what it has done; what it is trying to do; and what it hopes to become. And since modesty is only egotism turned wrong side out, I will make no special endeavor to conceal the fact that I have had something to do with the venture.

In London, from about Sixteen Hundred and Fifty to Sixteen Hundred and Ninety, Samuel and Thomas Roycroft printed and made very beautiful books. In choosing the name "Roycroft" for our shop we had these men in mind, but beyond this the word has a special significance, meaning King's Craft—King's craftsmen being a term used in the Guilds of the olden times for men who had achieved a high degree of skill—men who made things for the King. So a Roycrofter is a person who makes beautiful things, and makes them as well as he can. "The Roycrofters" is the legal name of our institution. It is a corporation, and the shares are distributed among the workers. No shares are held by any one but Roycrofters, and it is agreed that any worker who quits the Shop shall sell his shares back to the concern. This co-operative plan, it has been found, begets a high degree of personal diligence, a loyalty to the institution, a sentiment of fraternity and a feeling of permanency among the workers that is very beneficial to all concerned. Each worker, even the most humble, calls it "Our Shop," and feels that he is an integral and necessary part of the Whole.

Possibly there are a few who consider themselves more than necessary. Ali Baba, for instance, it is said, has referred to himself, at times, as the Whole Thing. And this is all right, too—I would never chide an excess of zeal: the pride of a worker in his worth and work is a thing to foster. It's the man who "does n't give a damn" who is really troublesome. The artistic big-head is not half so bad as apathy.

IN the month of December, Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-four, I printed the first "Little Journeys" in booklet form, at the local printing-office, having become discouraged in trying to find a publisher. But before offering the publication to the public, I decided to lay the matter again before G. P. Putnam's Sons, although they had declined the matter in manuscript form. Mr. George H. Putnam rather liked the matter and was induced to issue the periodical as a venture for one year. The scheme seemed to meet with success, the novel form of the publication being in its favor. The subscription reached nearly a thousand in six months; the newspapers were kind and the success of the plan suggested printing a pamphlet modeled on similar lines, telling what we thought about things in general, and publishers and magazine-editors in particular.

There was no intention at first of issuing more than one number of this pamphlet, but to get it through the mails at magazine rates we made up a little sub-

scription-list and asked that it be entered at the post-office at East Aurora as second-class matter. The postmaster adjusted his brass-rimmed spectacles, read the pamphlet, and decided that it surely was second-class matter.

We called it "The Philistine" because we were going after the "Chosen People" in literature. It was Leslie Stephen who said, "The term Philistine is a word used by prigs to designate people they do not like." When you call a man a bad name, you are that thing—not he. The Smug and Snugly Ensconced Denizens of Union Square called me a Philistine, and I said, "Yes, I am one, if a Philistine is something different from you." ¶ My helpers, the printers, were about to go away to pastures new; they were in debt, the town was small, they could not make a living. So they offered me their outfit for a thousand dollars. I accepted the proposition.

I decided to run "The Philistine" magazine for a year—to keep faith with the misguided and hopeful parties who had subscribed—and then quit. To fill in the time, we printed a book: we printed it like a William Morris book—printed it just as well as we could. It was cold in the old barn where we first set up "The Philistine," so I built a little building like an old English chapel right alongside of my house. There was one basement and a room up-stairs. I wanted it to be comfortable and pretty, and so we furnished our little shop cozily. We had four girls and three boys working for us then. The shop was never

locked, and the boys and girls used to come around evenings. It was really more pleasant than at home.

¶ I brought over a shelf of books from the library. Then I brought the piano, because the youngsters wanted to dance.

The girls brought flowers and birds, and the boys put up curtains at the windows. We were having a lot o' fun, with new subscriptions coming in almost every day, and once in a while an order for a book.

¶ The place got too small when we began to bind books, so we built a wing on one side; then a wing on the other side. To keep the three carpenters busy who had been building the wings, I set them to making furniture for the place. They made the furniture as good as they could—folks came along and bought it.

The boys picked up field-stones and built a great, splendid fireplace and chimney at one end of the shop. The work came out so well that I said: "Boys, here is a great scheme—these hardheads are splendid building material." So I advertised we would pay a dollar a load for niggerheads. The farmers began to haul stones; they hauled more stones, and at last they had hauled four thousand loads. We bought all the stone in the dollar limit, bulling the market on boulders. ¶ Three stone buildings have been built, another is in progress, and our plans are made to build an art-gallery of the same material—the stones that the builders rejected.

An artist blew in on the way to Nowhere, his bag-

gage a tomato-can. He thought he would stop over for a day or two—he is with us yet, and three years have gone by since he came, and now we could not do without him. Then we have a few Remittance Men, sent to us from a distance, without return tickets. Some of these men were willing to do anything but work—they offered to run things, to preach, to advise, to make love to the girls.

We bought them tickets to Chicago and without violence conducted them to the Four-o'clock train.

¶ We have boys who have been expelled from school, blind people, deaf people, old people, jail-birds and mental defectives, and have managed to set them all at useful work; but the Remittance Man of Good Family who smokes cigarettes in bed has proved too much for us—so we have given him the Four-o'clock without ruth.

We do not encourage people from a distance who want work to come on—they are apt to expect too much. They look for Utopia, when work is work, here as elsewhere. There is just as much need for patience, gentleness, loyalty and love here as anywhere. Application, desire to do the right thing, a willingness to help, and a well-curbed tongue are as necessary in East Aurora as in Tuskegee.

We do our work as well as we can, live one day at a time, and try to be kind.



THE village of East Aurora, Erie County, New York, the home of The Roycrofters, is eighteen miles southeast of the city of Buffalo. The place has a population of about two thousand people.

There is no wealth in the town and no poverty. In East Aurora there are six churches with pastors' salaries varying from three hundred to one thousand dollars a year; and we have a most excellent school. The place is not especially picturesque or attractive, being simply a representative New York State village. Lake Erie is ten miles distant, and Cazenovia Creek winds its lazy way along by the village.

The land around East Aurora is poor, and so reduced in purse are the farmers that no insurance company will insure farm property in Erie County under any conditions unless the farmer has some business outside of agriculture—the experience of the underwriters being that when a man is poor enough, he is also dishonest; insure a farmer's barn in New York State and there is a strong probability that he will soon invest in kerosene.

However, there is no real destitution, for a farmer can always raise enough produce to feed his family, and in a wooded country he can get fuel, even if he has to lift it between the dawn and the day.

Most of the workers in the Roycroft Shop are children of farming folk, and it is needless to add that they are not college-bred, nor have they had the advantages of foreign travel. One of our best

helpers, Uncle Billy Bushnell, has never been to Niagara Falls, and does not care to go. Uncle Billy says if you stay at home and do your work well enough, the world will come to you; which aphorism the old man backs up with another, probably derived from experience, to the effect that a man is a fool to chase after women, because, if he does n't, the women will chase after him.


The wisdom of this hard-headed old son of the soil—who abandoned agriculture for art at seventy—is exemplified in the fact that during the year just past, over twenty-eight thousand pilgrims have visited the Roycroft Shop—representing every state and territory of the Union and every civilized country on the globe, even far-off Iceland, New Zealand and the Isle of Guam.

Three hundred and ten people are on the pay-roll at the present writing. The principal work is printing, illuminating and binding books. We also work at ornamental blacksmithing, cabinet-work, painting pictures, clay-modeling and terra cotta. We issue three monthly publications, "The Philistine" magazine, "Little Journeys" and "The Fra."

"The Philistine" has a circulation of a little over one hundred thousand copies a month; we print seventy thousand copies of "Little Journeys," and fifty thousand copies of "The Fra," each issue. Most of the "Journey" booklets are returned to us for binding, and nearly one-half of "The Philistine" and "The Fra" magazines come back for the same

purpose. The binding of these publications is simple work, done by the boys and girls we have educated in this line ✱ ✱

Quite as important as the printing and binding is the illuminating of initials and title-pages. This is a revival of a lost art, gone with so much of the artistic work done by the monks of the olden time ✱ Yet there is a demand for such work, and so far as I know, we are the first concern in America to take up the hand-illumination of books as a business. Of course we have had to train our helpers, and from very crude attempts at decoration we have attained to a point where the British Museum and the "Bibliotheke" at the Hague have deigned to order and pay good golden guineas for specimens of our handicraft. Very naturally we want to do the best work possible, and so self-interest prompts us to be on the lookout for budding genius. The Roycroft is a quest for talent.

 HERE are no skilled people in the Roycroft Shop, except those who have become skilled since they came here, with a very few exceptions. Among these is Mr. Louis H. Kinder, master bookbinder, who spent seven years' apprenticeship in Leipsic learning his trade. Competent bibliophiles assure me that Mr. Kinder's work is not surpassed by that of any other bookbinder in America ✱ I have specimens of the work done by Riviere, Zahn, Cobden-Sanderson,

Zahnsdorf, "The Guild of Women Binders," of London, and the "Club Bindery," of New York; and we surely are not ashamed to show Mr. Kinder's work in the same case with these. But excellent and beautiful as Mr. Kinder's books are, his best work is in the encouragement and inspiration he has given to others * *

Skilled artisans are usually so jealous of their craft that they refuse to teach others—not so Mr. Kinder. Through his patient tutorship there are now five helpers in our Shop who can fetch along a full-levant book nearly to a finish. And besides that, there are forty others who can do certain parts well, and gradually are becoming skilful. It takes time to make a bookbinder: to bind a book beautifully, stoutly and well, and to hand-tool it is just as much of an art as to paint a beautiful picture.

In printing, our earlier attempts at "register" and "making ready" were often rather faulty, but with the aid of my faithful friends, we are doing work which I think ranks with the best. In the composition I have been especially helped by Charles Rosen, who set the type for our first book. This man has done for me the things I would have liked to do myself, but unfortunately I have only two hands and there are, so far, only twenty-four hours in a day. Happy is that man who has loyal, loving friends who are an extension of himself!


There is a market for the best, and the surest way, we think, to get away from competition is to do

your work a little better than the other fellow. The old tendency to make things cheaper, instead of better, in the book line is a fallacy, as shown in the fact that within ten years there have been a dozen failures of big publishing-houses in the United States. The liabilities of these bankrupt concerns footed the fine total of fourteen million dollars. The man who made more books and cheaper books than any one concern ever made, had the felicity to fail very shortly, with liabilities of something over a million dollars. He overdid the thing in matter of cheapness—mistook his market. Our motto is, "Not How Cheap, But How Good."

This is the richest country the world has ever known, far richer per capita than England—lending money to Europe. Once Americans were all shoddy—pioneers have to be, I'm told—but now only a part of us are shoddy. As men and women increase in culture and refinement, they want fewer things, and they want better things. The cheap article, I will admit, ministers to a certain grade of intellect; but if the man grows, there will come a time when, instead of a great many cheap and shoddy things, he will want a few good things ♫ He will want things that symbol solidity, truth, genuineness and beauty. ¶ The Roycrofters have many opportunities for improvement, not the least of which is the seeing, hearing and meeting distinguished people. We have a public dining-room, and not a day passes but men and women of note sit at meat with us. At the

evening meal, if our visitors are so inclined, and are of the right fiber, I ask them to talk. And if there is no one else to speak, I sometimes read a little from William Morris, Shakespeare, Walt Whitman or Ruskin. David Bispham has sung for us. Maude Adams and Minnie Maddern Fiske have also favored us with a taste of their quality. Judge Lindsey, Alfred Henry Lewis, Richard Le Gallienne, Robert Barr, have visited us, but to give a list of all the eminent men and women who have spoken, sung or played for us would lay me liable for infringement in printing "Who's Who." However, let me name one typical incident. The Boston Ideal Opera Company was playing in Buffalo, and Henry Clay Barnabee and half a dozen of his players took a run out to East Aurora. They were shown through the Shop by one of the girls whose work it is to receive visitors. A young woman of the company sat down at one of the pianos and played. I chanced to be near and asked Mr. Barnabee if he would not sing, and graciously he answered, "Fra Elbertus, I'll do anything that you say." I gave the signal that all the workers should quit their tasks and meet at the chapel. In five minutes we had an audience of three hundred—men in blouses and overalls, girls in big aprons—a very jolly, kindly, receptive company. ¶ Mr. Barnabee was at his best—I never saw him so funny. He sang, danced, recited, and told stories for forty minutes. ¶ The Roycrofters were, of course, delighted. ¶ One girl whispered to me as she went

out, "I wonder what great sorrow is gnawing at Barnabee's heart, that he is so wondrous gay!" Need I say that the girl who made the remark just quoted had drunk of life's cup to the very lees? We have a few such with us—and several of them are among our most loyal helpers.

NE fortuitous event that has worked to our decided advantage was "A Message to Garcia."

This article, not much more than a paragraph, covering only fifteen hundred words, was written one evening after supper in a single hour. It was the Twenty-second of February, Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-nine, Washington's Birthday, and we were just going to press with the March "Philistine." The thing leaped hot from my heart, written after a rather trying day, when I had been endeavoring to train some rather delinquent helpers in the way they should go.

The immediate suggestion, though, came from a little argument over the teacups when my son Bert suggested that Rowan was the real hero of the Cuban war. Rowan had gone alone and done the thing—carried the message to Garcia.

It came to me like a flash! yes, the boy is right, the hero is the man who does the thing—does his work—carries the message.

I got up from the table and wrote "A Message to Garcia."

I thought so little of it that we ran it in without a heading. The edition went out, and soon orders began to come for extra March "Philistines," a dozen, fifty, a hundred ; and when the American News Company ordered a thousand I asked one of my helpers which article it was that had stirred things up.

"It's that stuff about Garcia," he said.

The next day a telegram came from George H. Daniels, of the New York Central Railroad, thus: "Give price on one hundred thousand Rowan article in pamphlet form—Empire State Express advertisement on back—also state how soon can ship."


I replied giving price and stated we could supply the pamphlets in two years. Our facilities were small and a hundred thousand pamphlets looked like an awful undertaking.

The result was that I gave Mr. Daniels permission to reprint the article in his own way. He issued it in booklet form in editions of one hundred thousand each. Five editions were sent out, and then he got out an edition of half a million. Two or three of these half-million lots have been sent out by Mr. Daniels, and in addition the article has been reprinted in over two hundred magazines and newspapers. It has been translated into eleven languages, and been given a total circulation of over twenty-two million copies. It has attained, I believe, a larger circulation in the same length of time than any written article has ever before reached.

Of course, we can not tell just how much good "A

Message to Garcia" has done the Shop, but it probably doubled the circulation of both "Little Journeys" and "The Philistine." I do not consider it by any means my best piece of writing; but it was opportune—the time was ripe. Truth demands a certain expression, and too much had been said on the other side about the down-trodden, honest man looking for work and not being able to find it. The article in question states the other side. Men are needed—loyal, honest men who will do their work. "The world cries out for him—the man who can carry a message to Garcia."

The man who sent the message and the man who received it are dead. The man who carried it is still carrying other messages. The combination of theme, condition of the country, and method of circulation was so favorable that their conjunction will probably never occur again. Other men will write better articles, but they may go a-begging for lack of a Daniels to bring them to judgment.

ONCERNING my own personal history, I'll not tarry long to tell. It has been too much like the career of many another born in the semi-pioneer times of the Middle West, to attract much attention, unless one should go into the psychology of the thing with intent to show the evolution of a soul. But that will require a book—and some day I'll write it, after the manner of St. Augustine or Jean Jacques.

But just now I'll only say that I was born in Illinois, June Nineteenth, Eighteen Hundred and Fifty-six. My father was a country doctor, whose income never exceeded five hundred dollars a year. I left school at fifteen, with a fair hold on the three R's, and beyond this my education in "manual training" had been good * I knew all the forest-trees, all wild animals thereabout, every kind of fish, frog, fowl or bird that swam, ran or flew. I knew every kind of grain or vegetable, and its comparative value. I knew the different breeds of cattle, horses, sheep and swine * *

I could teach wild cows to stand while being milked; break horses to saddle or harness; could sow, plow and reap; knew the mysteries of apple butter, pumpkin pie, pickled beef, smoked side-meat, and could make lye at a leach and formulate soft soap.

That is to say, I was a bright, strong, active country boy who had been brought up to help his father and mother get a living for a large family. ¶ I was not so densely ignorant—don't feel sorry for country boys: God is often on their side.

At fifteen I worked on a farm and did a man's work for a boy's pay. I did not like it and told the man so. He replied, "You know what you can do."

And I replied, "Yes." I went westward like the course of empire and became a cowboy; tired of this and went to Chicago; worked in a printing-office; peddled soap from house to house; shoved lumber on the docks; read all the books I could find; wrote

letters back to country newspapers and became a reporter ; next got a job as traveling salesman ; taught in a district school ; read Emerson, Carlyle and Macaulay ; worked in a soap-factory ; read Shakespeare and committed most of "Hamlet" to memory with an eye on the stage ; became manager of the soap-factory, then partner ; evolved an Idea for the concern and put it on the track of making millions—knew it was going to make millions—did not want them ; sold out my interest for seventy-five thousand dollars and went to Harvard College ; tramped through Europe ; wrote for sundry newspapers ; penned two books (could n't find a publisher) ; taught night-school in Buffalo ; tramped through Europe some more and met William Morris (caught it) ; came back to East Aurora and started "Chautauqua Circles" ; studied Greek and Latin with a local clergyman ; raised trotting horses ; wrote "Little Journeys to the Homes of Good Men and Great." ¶ So that is how I got my education, such as it is. I am a graduate of the University of Hard Knocks, and I've taken several postgraduate courses ♫ I have worked at five different trades enough to be familiar with the tools. In Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-nine, Tufts College bestowed on me the degree of Master of Arts ; but since I did not earn the degree, it really does not count.

I have never been sick a day, never lost a meal through disinclination to eat, never consulted a doctor, never used tobacco or intoxicants. My

work has never been regulated by the eight-hour clause. ¶ Horses have been my only extravagance, and I ride horseback daily now: a horse that I broke myself, that has never been saddled by another, and that has never been harnessed.

My best friends have been workingmen, homely women and children. My father and mother are members of my household, and they work in the Shop when they are so inclined. My mother's business now is mostly to care for the flowers, and my father we call "Physician to The Roycrofters," as he gives free advice and attendance to all who desire his services. Needless to say, his medicine is mostly a matter of the mind. Unfortunately for him, we do not enjoy poor health, so there is very seldom any one sick to be cured. Fresh air is free, and outdoor exercise is not discouraged.

THE Roycroft Shop and belongings represent an investment of about three hundred thousand dollars. We have no liabilities, making it a strict business policy to sign no notes or other instruments of debt that may in the future prove inopportune and tend to disturb digestion. Fortune has favored us.

First, the country has grown tired of soft platitude, silly truism and undisputed things said in such a solemn way. So when "The Philistine" stepped into the ring and voiced in no uncertain tones what its editor thought, thinking men and women stopped

and listened. Editors of magazines refused my manuscript because they said it was too plain, too blunt, sometimes indelicate—it would give offense, subscribers would cancel, et cetera. To get my thoughts published I had to publish them myself; and people bought for the very reason for which the editors said they would cancel. The readers wanted brevity and plain statement—the editors said they did n't. ¶ The editors were wrong. They failed to properly diagnose a demand. I saw the demand and supplied it—for a consideration.

Next I believed the American public. A portion of it, at least, wanted a few good and beautiful books instead of a great many cheap books. The truth came to me in the early nineties, when John B. Alden and half a dozen other publishers of cheap books went to the wall & I read the R. G. Dun & Company bulletin and I said, "The publishers have mistaken their public—we want better books, not cheaper." In Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-two, I met William Morris, and after that I was sure I was right & &

Again I had gauged the public correctly—the publishers were wrong, as wrong as the editors. There was a market for the best, and the problem was to supply it. At first I bound my books in paper covers and simple boards. Men wrote to me wanting fine bindings. I said, "There is a market in America for the best—cheap boards, covered with cloth, stamped by machinery in gaudy tinsel and gilt, are not

enough." I found that the bookbinders were all dead. I found five hundred people in a book-factory in Chicago binding books, but not a bookbinder among them. They simply fed the books into hoppers and shot them out of chutes, and said they were bound. At last I discovered my Leipsic bookbinder, Louis Kinder, a silent man, with princely pride, who is sure that nobody but booklovers will go to heaven. He just wanted a bench and a chance to work—I supplied these, and here he is, doing the things I would like to do—doing them for me.

Next the public wanted to know about this thing—"What are you folks doing out there in that buckwheat town?" Since my twentieth year I have had one eye on the histrionic stage. I could talk in public a bit, had made political speeches, given entertainments in cross-road schoolhouses, made temperance harangues, was always called upon to introduce the speaker of the evening, and several times had given readings from my own amusing works for the modest stipend of ten dollars and keep. I would have taken the lecture platform had it not been nailed down.

In Eighteen Hundred and Ninety-eight, my friend Major Pond wanted to book me on a partnership deal at the Waldorf-Astoria. I did n't want to speak there—I had been saying unkind things in "The Philistine" about the Waldorf-Astoria folks. But the Major went ahead and made arrangements & I expected to be mobbed.

But Mr. Boldt, the manager of the hotel, had placed a suite of rooms at my disposal without money and without price. He treated me most cordially ; never referred to the outrageous things I had said about his tavern ; assured me that he enjoyed my writings, and told me of the pleasure he had in welcoming me.

¶ Thus did he heap hot cinders upon my occiput ✱ The Astor gallery seats eight hundred people. Major Pond had packed in nine hundred at one dollar each —three hundred were turned away. After the lecture the Major awaited me in the anteroom, fell on my neck and rained Pond's Extract down my back, crying, " Oh ! Oh ! Oh ! Why did n't we charge them two dollars apiece ! "

The next move was to make a tour of the principal cities under Major Pond's management. Neither one of us lost money—the Major surely did not.

Last season I gave eighty-one lectures, with a net profit to myself of a little over ten thousand dollars. I spoke at Tremont Temple in Boston, to twenty-two hundred people ; at Carnegie Hall, New York ; at Central Music Hall, Chicago, I spoke to all the house would hold ; at Chautauqua, my audience was five thousand people. It will be noted by the Discerning that my lectures have been of double importance, in that they have given an income and at the same time advertised the Roycroft Wares.


The success of The Roycroft Shop has not been brought about by any one scheme or plan ✱ The business is really a combination of several ideas, any

one of which would make a paying enterprise in itself. So it stands about thus :

First. The printing and publication of three magazines. Second. The printing of books (it being well known that some of the largest publishers in America—Scribner and Appleton, for instance—have no printing-plants, but have the work done for them). Third. The publication of books. Fourth. The artistic binding of books. Fifth. Authorship. Since I began printing my own manuscript, there is quite an eager demand for my writing, so I do a little of Class B for various publishers and editors. Sixth. The Lecture Lyceum. Seventh. Blacksmithing, carpenter-work, terra cotta and weaving. These industries have sprung up under the Roycroft care as a necessity. Men and women, many of them seventy years young or so, in the village, came to us and wanted work, and we simply gave them opportunity to do the things they could do best. We have found a market for all our wares, so no line of work has ever been a bill of expense.

I want no better clothing, no better food, no more comforts and conveniences than my helpers and fellow-workers have. I would be ashamed to monopolize a luxury—to take a beautiful work of art, say a painting or a marble statue, and keep it for my own pleasure and for the select few I might invite to see my beautiful things. Art is for all—beauty is for all. Harmony in all of its manifold forms should be like a sunset—free to all who can drink it in. The Roy-

croft Shop is for The Roycrofters, and each is limited only by his capacity to absorb.

RT is the expression of man's joy in his work, and all the joy and love that you can weave into a fabric comes out again and belongs to the individual who has the soul to appreciate it. Art is beauty; and beauty is a gratification, a peace and a solace to every normal man and woman. Beautiful sounds, beautiful colors, beautiful proportions, beautiful thoughts—how our souls hunger for them! Matter is only mind in an opaque condition; and all beauty is but a symbol of spirit. ♣ You can not get joy from feeding things all day into a machine. You must let the man work with hand and brain, and then out of the joy of this marriage of hand and brain, beauty will be born. It tells of a desire for harmony, peace, beauty, wholeness—holiness.

Art is the expression of man's joy in his work.

When you read a beautiful poem that makes your heart throb with gladness and gratitude, you are simply partaking of the emotion that the author felt when he wrote it. To possess a piece of work that the workman made in joyous animation is a source of joy to the possessor.

And this love of the work done by the marriage of hand and brain can never quite go out of fashion—for we are men and women, and our hopes and aims and final destiny are at last one. Where one enjoys,

all enjoy; where one suffers, all suffer. ¶ Say what you will of the coldness and selfishness of men, at the last we long for companionship and the fellowship of our kind. We are lost children, and when alone and the darkness gathers, we long for the close relationship of the brothers and sisters we knew in our childhood, and cry for the gentle arms that once rocked us to sleep. Men are homesick amid this sad, mad rush for wealth and place and power. The calm of the country invites, and we would fain do with less things, and go back to simplicity, and rest our tired heads in the lap of Mother Nature.

Life is expression. Life is a movement outward, an unfolding, a development. To be tied down, pinned to a task that is repugnant, and to have the shrill voice of Necessity whistling eternally in your ears, "Do this or starve," is to starve; for it starves the heart, the soul, and all the higher aspirations of your being pine away and die.

At The Roycroft Shop the workers are getting an education by doing things. Work should be the spontaneous expression of a man's best impulses. We grow only through exercise, and every faculty that is exercised, becomes strong, and those not used atrophy and die. Thus how necessary it is that we should exercise our highest and best! To develop the brain we have to exercise the body & Every muscle, every organ, has its corresponding convolution in the brain. To develop the mind, we must use the body. Manual training is essentially moral

training; and physical work is at its best, mental, moral and spiritual—and these are truths so great and yet so simple that until yesterday many wise men did not recognize them.

At The Roycroft Shop we are reaching out for an all-round development through work and right living.

And we have found it a good expedient—a wise business policy ✧ Sweat-shop methods can never succeed in producing beautiful things. And so the management of The Roycroft Shop surrounds the workers with beauty, allows many liberties, encourages cheerfulness and tries to promote kind thoughts, simply because it has been found that these things are transmuted into good, and come out again at the finger-tips of the workers in beautiful results. So we have pictures, statuary, flowers, ferns, palms, birds, and a piano in every room. We have the best sanitary appliances that money can buy; we have bathrooms, shower-baths, library, rest-rooms. Every week we have concerts, dances, lectures.

Besides being a workshop, the Roycroft is a School. We are following out a dozen distinct lines of study, and every worker in the place is enrolled as a member of one or more classes ✧ There are no fees to pupils, but each pupil purchases his own books—the care of his books and belongings being considered a part of one's education. All the teachers are workers in the Shop, and are volunteers, teaching without pay, beyond what each receives for his regular labor.

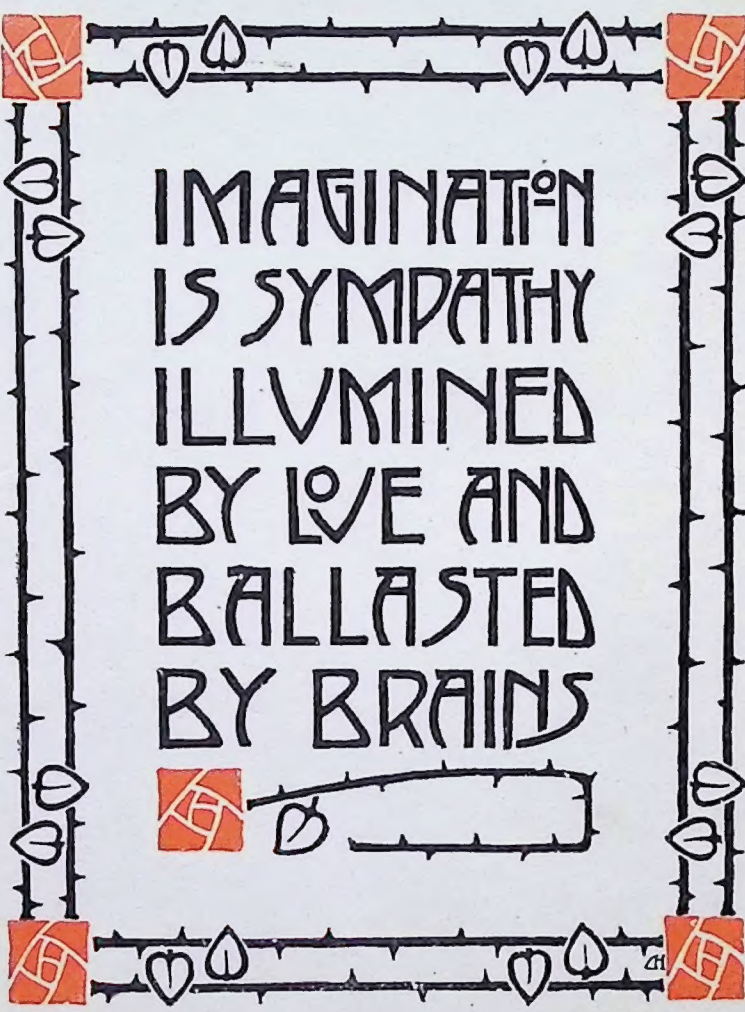
¶ The idea of teaching we have found is a great benefit—to the teacher. The teacher gets most out of the lessons. Once a week there is a faculty meeting, when each teacher gives in a verbal report of his stewardship. It is responsibility that develops one, and to know that your pupils expect you to know is a great incentive to study. Then teaching demands that you shall give—give yourself—and he who gives most receives most. We deepen our impressions by recounting them, and he who teaches others teaches himself. I am never quite so proud as when some one addresses me as “teacher.” We make a special feature, among our workers, of music. Our Musical Director is instructing over one hundred pupils of all ages, from three to seventy-three. We have a brass band, an orchestra, a choral society, a guitar and mandolin club, and a “Little German Band” that supplies the agrarians much glee.

We try to find out what each person can do best, what he wants to do, and then we encourage him to put his best into it—also to do something else besides his specialty, finding rest in change.

The thing that pays should be the expedient thing, and the expedient thing should be the proper and right thing. That which began with us as a matter of expediency is often referred to as a “philanthropy.” I do not like the word, and wish to state here that the Roycroft is in no sense a charity—I do not believe in giving any man something for nothing. You give a man a dollar and the man will think less of

you because he thinks less of himself; but if you give him a chance to earn a dollar, he will think more of himself and more of you. The only way to help people is to give them a chance to help themselves. So the Roycroft Idea is one of reciprocity—you help me and I'll help you. We will not be here forever, anyway: soon Death, the kind old Nurse, will come and rock us all to sleep, and we had better help one another while we may: we are going the same way—let's go hand in hand.

So here then endeth the Booklet entitled, THE ROYCROFT SHOP: A HISTORY, as written by Elbert Hubbard and done into print by THE ROYCROFTERS at their Shop, which is in East Aurora, Erie County, New York, U. S. A., September, mcmix



IMAGINATION
IS SYMPATHY
ILLUMINED
BY LOVE AND
BALLASTED
BY BRAINS

